

THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES OF COMOROS, MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES

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COMOROS

The Union of Comoros is located on three main islands in the Mozambique Channel about two-thirds of the way between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique. In 2005, the mineral industry of Comoros continued to be limited to the production of such construction materials as clay, sand and gravel, and crushed stone for local consumption. The demand for cement, steel, and petroleum products was met through imports.

In 2004 (the latest year for which data were available), imports of iron and steel were 5,190 metric tons (t) compared with 4,516 t in 2003 and 3,300 t in 1999. The value of iron and steel imports amounted to about \$3.4 million in 2004, or nearly 4% of total imports (International Monetary Fund, 2005, p. 35).

Imports of cement were 48,006 t in 2004 compared with 44,255 t in 2003 and 25,094 t in 1999. The value of cement imports amounted to about \$4.4 million in 2004, or 5% of total imports (International Monetary Fund, 2005, p. 35).

Fossil fuels provided most of the country's power. Imports of petroleum products were 49,015 t in 2004 compared with 44,662 t in 2003 and 17,144 t in 1999. The value of imported petroleum products amounted to \$17.9 million in 2004, or 21% of total imports (International Monetary Fund, 2005, p. 35).

Mineral output was not expected to change significantly because Comoros has very limited mineral resources and weak infrastructure. Import dependence and deforestation may lead to development of the country's geothermal resources.

Reference Cited

International Monetary Fund, 2005, Union of the Comoros—Statistical appendix: Washington, DC, International Monetary Fund, August 16, 43 p.

MAURITIUS

The Republic of Mauritius is located about 1,000 kilometers (km) east of Madagascar. In 2005, Mauritius produced basalt construction stone, lime from coral, sand, semimanufactured steel, and solar-evaporated sea salt. Local companies also cut imported diamond.

Domestic rolling mills produced steel-reinforcing bars (rebar) and welded mesh using imported ingot as raw material. Imports of iron and steel amounted to 105,000 t at a value of \$75.2 million in 2005, or about 2% of total imports (Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 2006, p. 20, 23).

United Basalt Products (UBP) was the leading supplier of building products in Mauritius. UBP produced aggregates at 10 locations on the island of Mauritius. On the island of Rodrigues, Welcome Industries Ltd. (a subsidiary of UBP) had an annual production capacity of nearly 150,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of aggregates. Gamma Civic Ltd. also produced aggregates.

Mauritius did not produce cement in 2005; all the country's cement requirements were imported. In 2005, imports of cement amounted to 694,000 t at a value of \$42.3 million, or about 1% of total imports (Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 2006, p. 20, 23).

Mauritius Chemical and Fertilizer Industry Ltd. was the country's only producer of fertilizers. National imports of fertilizers amounted to 62,000 t at a value of \$18.1 million in 2005 (Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 2006, p. 20, 23).

Mauritius had no identified resources of fossil fuels. Gamma Civic operated an asphalt plant; the demand for all other petroleum products was met through imports. The value of imported mineral fuels, lubricants, and related products amounted to \$515 million in 2005, or 16% of total imports (Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 2006, p. 20-21).

In the short run, the growth in the minerals sector is likely to be restricted to construction materials. Offshore oil exploration has been inconclusive, and polymetallic nodules on the ocean floor are unlikely to be developed in the foreseeable future.

Reference Cited

Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 2006, External trade—4th quarter 2005: Port Louis, Mauritius, Mauritius Central Statistics Office, 29 p.

REUNION

Reunion, which is an overseas department of France, is located about 650 km east of Madagascar. Production of mineral commodities represented only a small part of the economy of Reunion, although little quantitative information was available.

Holcim (Réunion) S.A. produced 380,000 t/yr of hydraulic cement by grinding imported clinker; its plant at Le Port had a capacity of 400,000 t/yr. The company also produced 1.3 million metric tons per year of aggregates from plants at Bras Panon, Sainte-Clotilde,

Saint-Joseph, and Saint-Pierre (Holcim (Réunion) S.A., 2003). Additionally, seacoast coral continued to meet local construction needs.

Reunion has no identified resources of coal or petroleum; all petroleum demand was met through imports. In 2004, the Government decided to build a 70-km railway to link St. Benoit, St. Denis, and St. Paul because of increasing road congestion. The railway was expected to be completed in 2012 at a cost of between \$1.6 billion and \$1.7 billion (International Railway Journal, 2004§¹).

Reference Cited

Holcim (Réunion) S.A., 2003, Holcim intègre l'environnement et la sécurité à son programme de développement (Holcim integrates environment and safety into its program of development): Le Port, Reunion, Holcim (Réunion) S.A. press release, November 23, 1 p.

Internet Reference Cited

International Railway Journal, 2004 (March 26), Réunion to have a railway, accessed May 5, 2005, at URL http://www.railjournal.com/latenews_archive.html.

SEYCHELLES

The Republic of Seychelles is a group of 40 granitic and 50 or more coralline islands that is located northeast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Mineral production in Seychelles consisted mostly of production of such construction materials as clay, coral, sand, and stone.

Seychelles had no identified resources of fossil fuels. In early 2005, the Government signed an exploration agreement with Petroquest Energy Inc. of the United States to explore for petroleum in an offshore concession that covered 30,000 square kilometers. The concession included areas around Coetivy Island and the Farquhar Islands, on the Constant Bank between Coetivy and Platte Islands, and on the Topaze Bank to the east of Frigate Island (Africa Energy Intelligence, 2005).

The short-term outlook for mineral production is for little change. Seychelles has modest natural resources, and any newly discovered resources of petroleum and natural gas could not be developed immediately.

Reference Cited

Africa Energy Intelligence, 2005, Oil sun rises on Indian Ocean, too: Africa Energy Intelligence, no. 386, February 2-15, p. 1.

¹A reference that includes a section mark (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1
MAURITIUS, REUNION, AND SEYCHELLES: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons)

Country and commodity	2001	2002	2003	2004 ^c	2005 ^c
MAURITIUS²					
Fertilizers	84,278	86,100	82,000	89,400 ³	90,000
Salt, marine	6,800	7,000	7,200 ^c	7,700	7,900
Sand, coral ^c	410,000	--	--	--	--
Steel, semimanufactures	48,700	52,400	58,700	65,000 ³	65,000
REUNION⁴					
Cement ^c	380,000	380,000	380,000	380,000	380,000
SEYCHELLES					
Dimension stone, granite	6,044	97,576	92,120	93,000	93,000
Gravel and crushed rock	245,000 ^c	239,746	212,926	213,000	213,000
Sand	8,128	2,840	2,165	2,200	2,200

^cEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. -- Zero.

¹Includes data available through March 13, 2006.

²In addition to the commodities listed, asphalt, basalt, and lime are also known to be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

³Reported figure.

⁴In addition to the commodity listed, coral and volcanic rock are also known to be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.